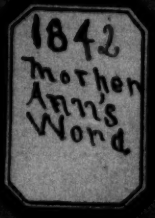

PAPERS
OF
SHAKERS

131

NEW YORK
New Lebanon

Mother Ann's Word to the Elders in Zion.

Part IV.

1. O ye my faithful watchmen! marvel not that I, your loving Mother, and ever watchful and careful Parent, have, at this moment of heavy burdens and deep tribulation, laid aside all things else, and retired by myself, as it were, to lament the sorrowful situation that my little ones, yea, the very objects of a kind Mother's & true Parent's

first care, have long been in

2. For truly they are like young & tender lambs, wildly ranging upon the rocky mountains, through the dismal forest, or on the common, exposed by day and by night, to the severity of the weather, to the raging winds that blow, and to become a prey to ravenous wolves & wild beasts of the forest, knowing no shepherd's voice, and feeling not their care; nay, not even that of their own dams.

3. O yea, indeed, sorely has the spirit of your Mother been grieved to behold all this, instead of

viewing the young of the flock placed in pleasant pastures, well fenced around for their protection, with careful shepherds close by their side, to watch and protect them, yea, such as would care for them, and not leave them to suffer harm, cold or hunger, or to stray from their bounds, & do injury to themselves, and thereby cause them double care & trouble when they return.

4. O my beloved, marvel not, I say, that I have of myself, even this day, sent this word unto you; neither marvel at

the doings of your Mother, in the means I have taken to convey my word to those whom you have chosen to protect and teach the little ones of my flock, and even my word unto them: For I have done this to relieve my burdened spirit, and lessen the grief of your beloved Father Joseph & Mother Lucy.

5. And how think ye, if I am indeed and in truth a Mother, a friend or a careful parent, that I could do otherwise; for where are there any true parents, even in nature, that would not

turn their first attention, at the risk of all things, yea, even of their own lives, to rescue their little ones from harm, or hide them from the enemy, if possible, when they saw him fast approaching to destroy them?

6. This is what I have done at this time. And where are the wealthy and able parents that would not provide careful nurses to attend to the young of their family? And would not the parents daily instruct the nurses in every crisis of their concerns with their little ones?

This, and this only have I done, by sending my word to the care-takers of my babes in Zion.

7. And again; where are the parents that care for the honorable character of their family, for the esteem and approbation of those around them, or desire to be considered as people of good gavernment; and more than all this, such as delight in the present comfort and happiness of their offspring, day by day, and that their children might regard them with dutiful respect, & honor them in their old age, that would,

in any wise, allow them to have a full range of the whole possessions of their parents, and have knowledge of all their concerns, to go when they please, & come when they choose, without any regard, even to the principles of morality.

8. O my beloved, consider upon these things a moment, with me, your Mother, and then cast your eyes around, and behold the distressed situation of my little ones, and I think you will not marvel at the grief of your Mother, nor wonder at my doings at this time,

for hath not your Heavenly Father sent forth his righteous, just and holy Laws, which are indeed to be kept through generations to come, in obedience to his word, by the inhabitants of his Zion on earth? Yea, indeed, in mighty mercy and everlasting love, hath he looked upon the present and rising generation.

9. And if the Almighty creator and God of all, will so condescend to draw so near to mortals, and show such Eternal loving kindness, and fatherly care for the despised few of his

named, among the innumerable race of his creation, then how can one think strange that I, the kind and careful, & most affectionate of Mothers, feel greatly concerned for the present prosperity & future welfare of my little ones, yea, even the very babes of my Father's house?

10. O then my beloved, receive, I beseech you, this little book from the hands of your Mother, and hide it not from those to whom I have written it. And if there be any among the shepherds of my little lambs

that cannot receive it thankfully, as a comforting & strengthening word of instruction to them, from a true and kind parent, and as a notice of parental affection to their little ones, then I say, I promise no further concern for them; I own them not as mine.

11. But as far as this shall circulate, in union with the holy anointed, and shall be thankfully received & readily obeyed, I will send from my own mansion, a little guardian

and protecting Angel, to remain with every class of little ones, in the house of Israel upon earth.

12. But when this is set at nought, and no longer received and obeyed, as the law of your Mother, and the order of her house, then shall I call my little Angels home, and bewail the destruction of my little ones, even as I have done this day.

13. And besides this, I will send a ball of my purest love, my richest blessing, my everlasting peace, & my true comefort, to every child of mine, that shall

be the keeper of this little book of my law, in union with their Elders. And every time they will read the first five Sections for their own benefit, and the four next, to my little ones, I will add to their store, yet another ball, or leave this permission with their guardian Angels. But O, never let it be perused as a common story book!

14. And as I have written it upon this, the first day that ye my children have kept as a sacred day in remembrance of me your Mother, or of my

birth*; so I should be well pleased, to have it ever read to my little ones, upon this day: And again on the 6th day of Augt in remembrance of my landing in America. If ye will do this to please me, then on these days I will remember my little ones, and will pray to my Heavenly Father for their protection and safe going, and for the comfort and prosperity of those that have the charge of them.

15. So now my word is nearly finished, and my Spirit will be

* March 1st 1841.

greatly relieved, if you will receive this, as the loving notice of a kind Mother. But listen a moment longer, O ye Elders in Zion; for I say, and with the most earnest desire to be listened to; that if ye turn away from you, and receive not the little ones that are brought unto you for protection, you will grieve the tenderest feelings of your Mother. And when you have taken them in, nurse, feed & clothe them, and gather such into the first Orders of Zion as you are thoughtful will make good & honourable

members. Prove them well, and ever remember to secure them lawfully.

16. When this you have done, never fear to act the part of true parents to them, as respects all management with them. — Deal with them as tho' they were your own, and you alone were to be responsible for their present and future welfare. Never place a child, when first taken in, that is over ten years old, in the class according to its age; but keep it back from two to six months, according to its age &

understanding, and its increase in honesty and obedience.

17. After a child has had two months privilege, and still continues to cleave to its own will, is stubborn, thievish, or given to lying & being deceitful, and does not seem to regard nor fear the orders given for its protection; then fear not to correct with the rod; and let this be faithfully done; yet with consideration. And never slack your hand for a child's screaming or kicking; but ever bring it to perfect obedience, before you show it any favour.

18. Never do this in the presence of any one of the class of children, and ever let it be the caretakers of the children that use the rod, if they are able in body. This is the word of your Mother, and this you need not fear to rely on; for no earthly power can, in any justice, ever condemn you for it, & this you well know.

19. And more than all this; no parents in nature, that care for the good of a child, would spare the rod when other means had failed to reform the child, until, seemingly it was utterly beyond reformation.

20. And O how can I bear to see my little one suffer so many hours of mortification, or rather vexation, and repeated petty punishments, and get hardened for want of true order, & a true parents correction, and I still be silent and withhold my word? This, beloved, I will do no longer; for if this my word can be listened to, & thoroughly proved, you may rest assured every babe, yea, even the least one in Zion, shall prove a blessing from this time.

21. So now listen to the last word of your Mother, in regard to my little ones. Ever let those that take care of them, deal impartially with them, at all times. Never mind trifles, nor punish small offences; but let your word be a law to them; & let not sin go unpunished.

22. Give them their hours of recreation, their times of study, and suitable privilege to learn, correctly, the sacred Exercises of worship. Teach them to do their work well, before they learn

to do it swiftly; to be prudent & saving, and above all, to regard & respect the sabbath, & the hours of worship at any time.

23. And lastly; teach them to love their little orders, & to obey them with delight. And when you read my word unto them, remind them of my promise. If you will hearken to this my word, which I now submit into the hands of your beloved Lead, then you may remember I remain your loving & ever blessed

Mother Ann.

Holy Mount (N. L. May 30th 1842.